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S E R V I C E S

HELD BY THE

Maryland Union Commission,

IN

CHARLES STREET M. E. CHURCH,

On the Evening of June 1st, 1865,

BEING

*The Day of Humiliation and Prayer appointed
by the President of the United
States of America.*

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AMERICAN UNION COMMISSION,

NOS. 89 AND 91 W. BALTIMORE STREET, BALTIMORE.

TO THE AMERICAN CHURCH AND PEOPLE—AN APPEAL.

THE desolation that reigns in the South at the present time almost baffles description. It challenges our deepest commiseration and magnanimity. Many of the people are scattered and homeless; their agriculture is broken up; many of their homes, churches and school-houses are in ashes; their towns and cities are without trade; their mills and founderies, their canals and railroads, are destroyed; the people are without employment or the means of support; their children are without the appliances of intellectual or moral education; their widows and orphans are weeping beside the graves of their dead, and thousands of their families are in exile.

To meet this condition of things, and to assist the people to start again upon the high road of social and national prosperity, *The American Union Commission* has been organized. It is organized upon a national basis. Its object is to promote *Industry, Education, Freedom, and Christian civilization.*

Now that the question of one nation, one Constitution and one destiny has reached a finality, let us rise in the majesty of a national charity, and help re-organize the broken fragments of society, and rebind them around the national heart. This movement received the endorsement of our late lamented President, and also receives the cordial endorsement of President Johnson, and must receive the approval and co-operation of all minds of liberal and comprehensive views.

An exploration of the field reveals an appalling state of things. The necessity of immediate and general action is imperious. Thousands of families, that had no agency in bringing upon this section of our country this state of things, are in abject poverty and distress. Many of them were in affluent circumstances before the war.

Let it not be said that, when Ireland and other foreign nations were in distress, we came to their rescue, and that now we hide ourselves from our own flesh. Charity and the common dictates of humanity forbid it. But rather, in the spirit of a national charity and brotherhood, let us come to the rescue of this people from starvation and distress. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble." "It is more blessed to give than to receive." "The liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand." This is as true of nations as individuals. In the name of God, and of our common humanity, let us act, and act at once. It is but justice to help our friends, and it is the command of Christ, "that, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink, and thus overcome evil with good."

Send moneys to J. N. BROWN, Treasurer, and stores to G. S. GRIFFITH, President.

OFFICERS.—G. S. Griffith, President; Rev. C. Dickson, D. D., Vice-President; J. C. Bridges, 2d Vice-President; J. M. Frazier, 3d Vice-President; J. N. Brown, Treasurer, Banker, corner Calvert and Baltimore streets; Rev. F. Israel, Corresponding Secretary; Rev. E. R. Eschbach, Recording Secretary; Rev. O. M. McDowell, Financial Agent.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.—G. S. Griffith, Chairman; Wm. Bridges, Jesse Tyson, Wm. B. Canfield, Samuel M. Shoemaker, J. Henry Giese, J. N. Brown, J. C. Bridges, Dr. J. C. Thomas.

BOARD OF MANAGERS OF THE MARYLAND UNION COMMISSION.—Rev. Cyrus Dickson, D. D., Dr. J. C. Thomas, G. F. Hopkins, Rev. H. Dunning, Hon. J. M. Frazier, John Hurst, G. S. Griffith, J. C. Bridges, Wm. B. Canfield, W. F. Carey, Rev. John Kulling, J. Henry Giese, J. Russell Kelso, Rev. Fielder Israel, Rev. I. P. Cook, Dr. J. F. Winslow, John Coates, Thos. G. Makenzie, Wm. Bridges, Jesse Tyson, R. M. Janny, Wm. Crane, Samuel M. Shoemaker, Henry Kelsey, John N. Brown, Rev. E. R. Eschbach, W. A. Wisong, Rev. George P. Hays, John L. Reid, R. H. Williams, Frederick, Md.

C.S. 4 Mr. 12

Services held in Charles Street Church, June 1, 1865.

The meeting was called to order by the President of the Maryland Union Commission, and ably addressed by Rev. Cyrus Dickson, D. D., and Rev. Lyman Abbott, Secretary of the American Union Commission, and Rev. Isaac P. Cook. The meeting was deeply interesting, and a collection of over \$1,200 was taken to aid this noble charity.

The following programme will indicate the order of exercises. After the meeting was called to order by the President, G. S. Griffith, the congregation joined in singing:

From all that dwell below the skies,
Let the Creator's praise arise;
Let the Redeemer's name be sung,
Through every land, by every tongue.

Eternal are thy mercies, Lord—
Eternal truth attends thy word;
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore,
Till suns shall rise and set no more.

Your lofty themes, ye mortals, bring,
In songs of praise divinely sing;
The great salvation loud proclaim,
And shout for joy the Saviour's name.

In every land begin the song—
To every land the strains prolong;
In cheerful sounds all voices raise,
And fill the world with loudest praise.

The Scriptures were read by Rev. A. E. Gibson, of the Broadway Methodist Episcopal Church, followed by a prayer by Rev. H. Dunning, of the Presbyterian Church. The congregation then joined in singing the following verses :

Father of mercies, send thy grace,
 All powerful from above,
 To form in our obedient souls
 The image of thy love.

O ! may our sympathizing breasts
 That generous pleasure know,
 Kindly to share in others' joy,
 And weep for others' woe.

When poor and helpless sons of grief
 In deep distress are laid,
 Soft be our hearts their pains to feel,
 And swift our hands to aid.

On wings of love the Saviour flew,
 To bless a ruined race ;
 We would, O Lord, thy steps pursue,
 Thy bright examples trace.

The meeting was now addressed in a few prefatory remarks by Rev. George P. Hays, Treasurer of M. B. Christian Commission, which were pertinent to the occasion. The Rev. Mr. Hays arose and said that the necessity of organizing a Union Commission in Baltimore appeared from the number of refugees that daily flocked to the Christian Commission rooms for help to return to their homes, from which they had been driven by a merciless conscription. Twenty-five and thirty are coming daily. And then the utter destitution of many portions of country where the armies had passed and repassed, devouring and destroying

everything, forced upon the community the necessity of some organization to meet this condition of things. The money and stores contributed for the relief of the sick and wounded soldiers and sailors could not be diverted from its original design.

He said that many confounded the U. S. Christian Commission and the American Union Commission, by supposing they were one and the same thing. That the U. S. Christian Commission had been organized with reference to the army and navy, and had accomplished a glorious work, and had nearly finished its legitimate purpose; but the Union Commission had been organized with reference to citizens that had been reduced to poverty and distress by the war.

He further remarked that G. S. Griffith had received several letters from Rev. Jos. P. Thompson, D. D., of New York, President of the Parent Society, urging the importance of organizing a branch Union Commission in Baltimore. Mr. Griffith desired such an organization, and was willing to contribute to its funds; and beyond this, he desired nothing for himself. A Board of Managers was elected, and while Mr. Griffith was on a tour to the South to inspect the condition of the people, he was elected to the Presidency of the Maryland Union Commission; and from the satisfactory manner in which he had discharged the arduous duties as Chairman of the Maryland Branch of the U. S. Christian Commission, they have no doubt fixed upon the right man. He also stated that the American Union Commission had the sanction of the authorities of the U. S. Government.

Then came the addresses of Revs. Dickson, Abbott and Cook, which were able, appropriate, and secured the closest

attention of a large audience to a late hour. A liberal collection followed.

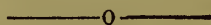
The following was the closing of the programme for the evening :

THE WATCHMAN'S REPORT.

Watchman, tell us of the night,
 What its signs of promise are.
 Trav'ler, o'er yon mountain's height,
 See the glory-beaming star.
 Watchman, does its beauteous ray
 Aught of hope or joy foretell ?
 Trav'ler, yes, it brings the day—
 Promised day of Israel.

Watchman, tell us of the night,
 For the morning seems to dawn.
 Trav'ler, darkness takes its flight,
 Doubt and terror are withdrawn.
 Watchman, let thy wand'ring cease,
 Hie thee to thy quiet home.
 Trav'ler, lo ! the Prince of Peace—
 Lo ! the Son of God is come.

Prayer by Rev. Dr. Cole. Doxology. Benediction by Rev. E. R. Eschbach.



ADDRESS OF REV. DR. DICKSON.

Rev. Dr. Dickson was now introduced to the audience, and spoke as follows :

My Christian Friends:—I am profoundly impressed with the fitness of this service to terminate the solemnities of this day. The nation has been called to mourn the loss of her Chief Magistrate, and to humble itself before God, in

view of His dispensations, with prayer and fastings. Jehovah, by the Prophet Isaiah, three thousand years ago, pointed out clearly the manner in which such services must be observed, in order to secure the divine approbation. "Is not this the Fast which I have chosen? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring into thy house those that are cast out? When thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh"—Isa., lviii: 7.

To-night we are met to "deal our bread to the hungry," as Jehovah commanded his Israel of old. This is the very object of "*The American Union Commission*."

A few hours after the evacuation of Richmond, on the morning of the 3d of April, its office was opened in that city, and began at once to distribute; at first to all applicants—afterwards, to those commended by ministers of the gospel. Now the city is divided into districts, under the care of trustworthy men, by whom each application is examined personally and reported.

Stores of all kinds, suitable for the sick, or hungry, or destitute, as tea, coffee, sugar, flour, farina, crackers, &c., &c., are distributed on the recommendation of this committee of citizens. Besides, the Commission has a large soup-house, used by the ladies of Richmond during the war, at which is made, and gratuitously distributed, daily, three hundred gallons of excellent soup. This soup-house ought to be called Bethesda—a house of mercy.

As to the *extent* and *duration* of the work of the Commission, it must be wide as the immense sections of country desolated by the war, and will last as long as its sufferings and necessities continue.

The *urgency* is immediate and pressing. Food, clothing, seed-corn, and implements of agriculture, must be furnished at once. They are in need of all things. More than a thousand barns and mills have been destroyed in the Valley of Virginia and along the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge! I was told by a farmer in Petersburg that corn, if planted before the 15th of June, would ripen in the counties about Lynchburg. The glorious Valleys of the Shenandoah and James must wave this autumn with fields of yellow corn, or the woes of famine will oppress the poor people during the sad days and nights of next winter. The mills must be rebuilt, and the now broken water-wheel must turn again, to prepare the flour and meal for the hungry in these unhappy sections. We must help them to bring back the lowing cattle, the sheep, the swine, the domestic fowls—the many things which, before the desolation of war, made these sections the garden of the land.

Will the rich States of Maryland, Pennsylvania and New York, who, a few years ago, sent bread to the millions of famine-stricken Ireland, refuse now to feed and clothe their countrymen—their “own flesh and blood?” No, my brethren! No, it cannot, it must not, be! Shall they who, in 1824, gave a listening ear to the cry of suffering from far away beyond the blue Atlantic and Mediterranean and sent to Greece the relief she needed, be insensible to the wants and woes of their own countrymen? No, my brethren! they must be supplied.

As for motives to stimulate us to the work, there is :

First. Our sympathy for sufferings so great, so vast, so pressing, and so painful—a sympathy that rises irrepressibly in every heart.

Second. Our duty as *Christians*. The words of the Lord Jesus are conclusive ; “ If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink.” They need no exposition or enforcement. They are *the words* of the Lord Jesus Christ.

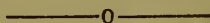
If such be the duty to enemies, how much more towards countrymen and fellow-christians ? Many of these sufferers are our kindred, “ bone and blood,” and no more the cause of these calamities than we ourselves ; many of them loyal, through all trials and exposures, to the flag and graves and country of our common fathers. If I should feed my *enemy*, much more my *friend*.

Patriotism demands it. Whatever else these four eventful years have shown, this one thing has been plainly demonstrated : that the *people of this land are to live together*. From the gulf to the lakes, and from ocean to ocean, we shall be but *one country*. It is then our highest interest to cultivate peace and brotherly kindness among ourselves. There are enough elements in this land to cause continual strife and division. These “ roots of bitterness” will be eradicated and destroyed, by God’s blessing, on such kind offices and ministrations as we are met to-night to promote. These will make us “ repairers of the breach, and restorers of the paths to dwell in.”

In additon to this—if the predictions of God’s word be rightly read—the world is near that final struggle, styled in Revelations, “ The Battle of the Great Day of God Almighty !” In those tremendous conflicts, it is of the very last moment to ourselves, our religion, and our race, that this land should be *one in fact*, as well as *form*—one in *heart*, as well as one in *home*.

What, then, so divinely designed to accomplish this true and happy *unity*, in view of these near and terrific strug-

gles, as this *feeding* and *clothing* our destitute and distressed countrymen? If we meet the responsibilities now upon us, we shall illustrate to our land and to our times, and to all lands and to all times, true *philanthropy*, *religion* and *patriotism*; shall secure the good of our country, the commendations of mankind, and the approbation of God. In after years, history will record in brighter characters, and the coming generations read with profounder pleasure, of our gifts for the needy, than the struggles and heroism of our camps and our battle-fields.



ADDRESS OF REV. LYMAN ABBOTT.

Ladies and Gentlemen :—I propose to answer to-night some questions which are frequently asked me. I wish indeed you could ask the questions yourselves which you would wish me to answer. But since this is not admissible, I must imagine them; assuming that you will wish substantially the same information which others have sought.

What is the Union Commission?

It is a national organization. It consists of Commissions already established in the cities of Baltimore, New York, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Nashville, Richmond, Charleston, and other places. These are all united in one National organization. The officers of the various district Commissions, together with a Central Committee in New York, constitute the American Union Commission. In its general features, it thus greatly resembles the Christian Commission, the practical wisdom of whose organization has been demonstrated by its past efficiency.

What is the object of the Union Commission ?

The first article of its Constitution answers that question. *"It is constituted for the purpose of aiding and co-operating with the people of those portions of the United States which have been impoverished and desolated by the war, in the restoration of their civil and social condition upon the basis of industry, education, freedom and christian morality."* I pray you note those last four words. We recognize no civilization that is not built upon a universal industry, general education, the freedom of all men, and the christian religion. Some think that because the war is over, and peace declared, and the trumpet and drum know no music but that of triumph, that therefore our work is ended. No ! It is but just begun. Where we have destroyed, we must rebuild.

But what specific things has this Commission done, what is it doing, what does it propose to do ?

I. It has already provided for the immediate and pressing wants of thousands of refugees. As the waves of war have surged to and fro over the Southern States, these have flocked in great crowds to our Northern borders. Many have been loyal. Most have been helpless women and children. Multitudes have died from exposure and want. By scores and hundreds they have been brought by government, and laid upon the wharves of St. Louis, Cairo, Louisville, Cincinnati, in the West, or left in the streets of Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York in the East. The State has said, they are not our poor, we cannot provide for them. The county has said they do not belong to us, we cannot shelter them. The Sanitary and Christian Commissions have properly said we have no right to use our funds in their behalf. Yet it was impossible for a Christian

people to suffer them to die of want in the midst of plenty. The first duty of the Union Commission has been to render these unfortunate sufferers temporary aid. We have been provided by government with every facility for that purpose ; transportation, rations, and often buildings have been furnished. Acting under the authority and with the co-operation of government, the Commission has received these unfortunates, has provided temporary homes at different points, has furnished them with food, clothing, shelter, medicine, has cared for the sick and the infirm, and has provided the able-bodied with permanent means of employment throughout the country. It has thus made provision for many thousands of refugees, and prevented a pauperism which threatened at one time to be the greatest and most terrible the world has ever seen.

II. But the war has ceased. The exigencies which have compelled these people to abandon their homes are over. Henceforth our work lies chiefly in the Southern States themselves. The destitution which exists in many localities there is appalling. Thousands of people, living in the midst of a once rich and fertile country, are left without any adequate means of support. Rich and poor, loyal and disloyal, guilty and innocent, are overwhelmed in a common ruin. That ruin, it is true, they have brought upon themselves. It was the inevitable necessity of war. Nothing less would suffice to break the spirit and power of a causeless rebellion. I do not condemn the punishment as too severe. I defend it as just and necessary. But the rebellion is ended. The foe prostrate and bleeding lies at the feet of a victorious nation. There is no need of further punishment. Magnanimity will scorn to strike a fallen foe ; nay, will make haste to give it both the quarter and succor that

it asks. From the wilds of Arkansas to the Atlantic coast, from the valley of the Shenandoah to the Gulf, there comes to our ears the wail of hunger, the cry for bread. In the city of Richmond alone some three thousand people were thrown out of employment by the fires set by rebel hands. Their little ones cry for food. The impoverished city can do nothing for them. The richest are poor. Ladies of the highest position carry their jewels and their family plate to the commanding General, and beg him to raise a little money on them to support their destitute and desolate families. Shall they be refused? Shall plenty leave poverty to starve?

I hear the voice of a surly objecter—"Good enough for them. Starving are they; and in rags, and dying? Our prisoners starved and went in rags, and died in Richmond. Let them eat the bread they set for us."

Friend! listen to a story. A year ago last winter, when our prisoners were suffering the untold horrors of that terrible imprisonment on Belle Isle, had you been there, you might have seen every alternate day a poor woman, crossing in a boat to the place of their confinement. Her husband had gone North before the war, enlisted in the Union ranks, never been heard of since, and doubtless lies to-day one of the great host of unknown dead. Always loyal, this woman's heart was now doubly consecrated to the Union by the baptism of her husband's blood. In every patriot soldier she saw a brother. Perhaps she hoped some day to learn of him, of whose safety she did not yet utterly despair.

Twice or thrice a week, and sometimes oftener, she filled her basket with provisions, begged in the name of her destitute family, or given by a wealthier but equally loyal neighbor under cover of charity, and carried them to our imprisoned boys. Often her children begged with tears for

some addition to their scanty meal from the well filled basket; but always in vain. Never was shew bread in the ancient Temple more religiously dedicated to the service of the Lord, than the contents of that basket, to the service of christian patriotism. All winter long, at personal hazard to herself, that poor woman, poor in money, in knowledge, in position, but rich in great-hearted patriotism, a commoner, but of God's nobility, all winter long was the Sanitary and Christian Commission to our suffering soldiers on Belle Isle. Last week I saw her in Richmond. She was without means, money or employment. Her landlady threatened to turn her out of doors unless she continued to pay in United States currency the exorbitant rent she had paid in worthless Confederate paper. And when our agent brought me to her, and I learned the story of her want from her own lips, while the story of her services I learned chiefly from the lips of others, tell me, my friend, ought I to have answered as the message of the patriotic North, "Good enough for you." In securing for her an employment, and means of livelihood, did I more than you would have me do?

III. But there is another work no less important than this of providing temporary relief. Industry is dead. The means of industry are destroyed. These must be refurnished, that labor may be revived, and communities saved from that danger of pauperism which is now really imminent. The people, sick of the rebellion, weary of war, desire to go to work. Even those who have never labored are willing to begin. But they are without implements—they are without the means to buy. They sit in enforced idleness. If we do not wish one-half our country to be blasted with the mildew of a permanent poverty, we must

encourage and assist in the establishment of free and universal labor. Last week, in company with two others of our Commission, I took a ride of twenty miles about Richmond. We calculated that in that ride we saw two miles of fencing, a hundred acres of corn, and half as much of wheat. We saw one sheep, two pigs, and twenty to twenty-five head of cattle—horses, mules, cows, oxen, calves, all told. I saw in Richmond one farmer who told me he had three hundred and twenty acres of land, that his whole stock in trade consisted of two chickens and one pig, that he traveled forty miles to buy an axe, and paid four dollars and seventy-five cents for it, that he spent three days and a half in hunting for a rake, and finally came away and left his boy to continue the search. Those that would work cannot—worse than the ancient Israelites, they are required to make their bricks without straw, clay, trowel or kiln. The loyal few of Richmond said: Gen. Ord himself said, by all means send us seed and implements. I met a poor woman who had a farm ten miles south of the city. Her husband was blind—her servants, as in multitudes of cases, desired to continue with her. “I have no fault to find with the Yankees,” she said. (We are all Yankees now, you know) “They were very kind to me. They preserved my property until a battle was imminent; then they took me away—they pulled down my house to give better range to their guns—and as the armies swept along, we were carried with them—and I and my poor husband are without a home. If I can only get back, and get up a little shelter, and some seed, and a spade, my servants will come back, and we can raise enough this summer to get through the winter.” Now one of three things is certain; either, in our overflowing abundance we must sit still with folded

arms and blinded eyes and deafened ears, and let that woman starve, or we must feed her and her dependent husband all winter long, or we must send them *now*, the spade, and hoe, and rake, and seed, that they may support themselves. This is true benevolence, to help the industrious and the willing to help themselves. And this is the work we are doing. We are sending food, clothing, seed and implements into the States of Arkansas, Tennessee, Virginia, North and South Carolina and Georgia, and mean to extend our work into every desolated State. Nobly, generously, heartily, have the people of the North supported us thus far. In about six months, we have expended in money and supplies, nearly, if not quite, \$100,000 in this work of relief and restoration. But what is this among so many? If every dollar were a hundred the supply would not be great, nor the work overdone.

IV. The temporary relief of these people is the most immediate, but it is not the most important work we have to do. I need not remind you that in many of these States there have never been any efficient systems of education. The great mass of the people have grown up in ignorance, an ignorance which rendered them the prey of the politicians; which alone rendered this rebellion possible. The few schools which once existed have been closed during the war. In one of our schools at Richmond I asked a class of twenty, the highest class it was, how many had been to school during the past year. Four raised their hands. One had been a fortnight, one two months. In Nashville there has been no school since the occupation of the city. For four years the boys of the South have been running wild; the devil has been their only teacher. A few schools have been preserved amid the general wreck. The work of

education we are entering upon. We can obtain scholars, teachers, buildings. We only need the money to open at once hundreds of schools, where the lessons of Union, liberty and the christian religion, shall be wisely taught, and you may be sure, gladly learned.

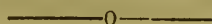
V. Such is our present work, while other labors loom up in the future, indefinite but grand. A free press must be established, and will require aid from Northern capital. Emigration must be stimulated, guided, directed. Statistical information must be obtained and made accessible. In short, all things must be done necessary to bind together these States in a Union of love, as well as of law.

A great work is this, you say; and impracticable. Great it is—but the American people are a great people. Impracticable it is not. Daniel Webster, standing upon Bunker Hill, where he was to speak upon the dedication of the monument, was so pressed upon by the swaying crowd, that there was danger that platform and speaker would be overwhelmed and crushed, “Stand back a little, gentlemen,” said he. “It is impossible, Mr. Webster,” replied some one in the crowd. “Impossible,” echoed the great statesman, “nothing is impossible on Bunker Hill.” Great is the work I have endeavored to depict to you—but not impossible. Nothing is impossible to those who by the last four years have demonstrated their ability to accomplish impossibilities. A great work it is; and as glorious as great. I do not wonder that President Lincoln, who with his own hand revised our Constitution, and endorsed it as it stands, said, when the purpose of this Commission was explained to him, “Gentlemen, it is a work that must be done, and receives my hearty sanction.” I do not wonder that President Johnson, who had known something of its

operations in Tennessee, said last week to a delegation which visited him, "Gentlemen, anything I can do, personally or officially, to aid you in this work, I will gladly do." It is not strange that every department of the government affords us needed facilities; nor surprising that those gentlemen of the South whose loyalty, tried in the hot furnace, has come forth as gold seven times purified, should everywhere receive us with a cordial greeting of warmest welcome.

This is not a work of charity I set before you, it is one of patriotism. We have but one country. The boundaries of the States do not separate us; they only bind us in a closer union. The desolations of Tennessee, Virginia, the Carolinas, are the desolations of my own dear land. In the erection in every State of genuine republicanism, universal freedom, revived industry, popular education, you, I, every American possesses the strongest interest. Every American should make haste to participate in the work of establishing a Christian civilization. But of all States in the Union, Maryland should be first in this sublime labor; Maryland that has stood like a rock in the midst of a stormy sea, about which the waves of secession have roared and rolled in vain; Maryland, first to abolish slavery from her own borders, and only second to adopt the Constitutional amendment abolishing it from all the land; Maryland, on whose statute books there stands to-day a system of education esteemed by competent judges the best which now exists in all the Union; Maryland, whose banners are all aglow with the ruddy light of that latter day glory, toward which now, thank God, the face of the whole nation expectant turns; Maryland, not only by her sublime example, but also by her kindly words and generous deeds, should assist as well as summon her prostrate companions to rise, that they may

stand with her in the same rank, march under the same banner, and share the same blessings of peace and prosperity, under the national emblem of liberty and union.



ADDRESS OF REV. ISAAC P. COOK.

REV. ISAAC P. COOK, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, remarked in substance as follows:

Mr. President:—The “American Union Commission,” the interests of which we have met to promote, is a new candidate for public favor and support.

The introduction of a stranger, is not sufficient to secure your confidence and co-operation; it is necessary to know the object of his visit, and the work in which he proposes to engage, before you will be prepared to extend to him your influence, and solicit the aid of others in the promotion of his enterprise.

Among the most remarkable events of the age in which we live, was the organization of the “Christian Commission.” The history of its work of patriotic and christian love, will be read by future generations with wonder and admiration.

The signal overthrow of the rebellion, and the triumph of the national arms, will soon render any further service by the “Christian Commission,” unnecessary. Its noble spirited leaders will retire from the fields which they have occupied, with the thanks of the nation and with the approval of God.

Meanwhile, as the dark cloud of war is being lifted up from the States in rebellion, new scenes are developing, and wide-spread avenues are opening before us, for the exercise of humanity and kindness.

Refugees, embracing men, women and children, from Southern States, are seeking shelter among the loyal people of the country. These sufferers are destitute of nearly every earthly comfort, and have no prospect of relief from their deplorable condition, except from the people of the loyal States.

The impoverished families of the South are also appealing for aid. With a worthless currency, destitute of food, clothing, grain for their fields, agricultural implements to cultivate their land, and the means of education for their children; should not their cry for relief be heard and responded to, before the cold and storms of the coming winter set in?

The *loyal* among these people, *without regard to sex or color*, should be relieved.

Nor should such acts of kindness be withheld from those who, under the pressure of circumstances surrounding them, could scarcely resist the tide which swept them into the Confederate army. No help should be extended to a rebel in arms; but when he is conquered and subdued, we may relieve him, as a suffering, and we hope, a repentant brother.

We have no words of extenuation for the crimes of the leaders of the rebellion; but for the masses of the South, the widows and orphans of those who have fallen in battle, we have commiseration, and would encourage acts of christian kindness and philanthropy. 'Tis christian to be magnanimous, to a discomfited and suffering community.

The "American Union Commission" proposes to enter this vast field, and to the extent of the means placed at its disposal, to relieve the classes of persons we have enumerated. It is due to the public, that it should be distinctly understood, that the "American Union Commission" has no sympathy with treason! If it were other-

wise, your speaker and those with whom he is associated in this work, would separate themselves from it. Words of earnest caution have been addressed to members of this new "Commission," by loyal and patriotic citizens, prompted on their part, by an apprehension, that inconsiderate aid and relief granted to the people of the South, may encourage the spirit of rebellion among them, and weaken the power of the national government.

Your speaker solicited contributions this morning in a neighboring church for this cause. In one of the collection plates a note was found, carefully written, nearly in the following language: "*Do you think it appropriate to make collections for the relief of the people who sustained the rebellion, which led to the assassination of President Lincoln, and that, too, on the day when we have met to commemorate his virtues?*"

This same question has occupied the minds of others. It should be answered satisfactorily. If this proposed action is against our nation, if it could in any manner betray a want of proper regard for the martyr President, then no loyal man should touch it, or give it his countenance.

This question had to be solved by your speaker, before this public meeting commenced.

God's Holy Word furnished an answer, "if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." This is the highest authority.

Not professing to hold converse with departed spirits, no appeal was made to the spirit of Abraham Lincoln for an answer to the question proposed by his devoted friend. No doubt, however, was entertained, if the spirit of that kind-hearted man could have been invoked for such a purpose,

his reply to his fellow-countrymen would have been, "FEED, CLOTHE, RELIEVE, EDUCATE, YOUR VANQUISHED ENEMIES AND MINE."

Who doubts it?

No kinder man breathed than President Lincoln: if he erred, it was in executive clemency; he was devising measures of conciliation and kindness, when the wickedness of the rebellion culminated in his assassination.

We have a final reply to the above question, in the approval of the President of the United States, of the object and work of the "American Union Commission." The facilities of the government will be afforded to its authorized agents and delegates.

Let us, therefore, give to the "American Union Commission," our countenance and generous support. Let the distributions made by its agents, be just and equal among the citizens. Let no loyal family be neglected on account of their color or position in society. Extend generous aid to the widows and orphan children, of those who fell in the so-called Southern cause. They erred, grievously erred; but do not visit the sins of the father upon his helpless and homeless little ones.

The future character and success of the "American Union Commission," will depend upon the wisdom and prudence of its management. As none but known loyal citizens have the control of its operations, we may confidently rely, that it will always and everywhere, promote loyalty to the government, the principles of freedom, education and morality.

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forts which money would bring, and, on the other, no funds to procure them. In these circumstances, your chairman has advanced between five and six thousand dollars at once, out of his own purse, to purchase the necessary comforts for sufferers in the hospitals. He has done this without waiting to ask whether it would ever be repaid. But Providence has abundantly rewarded his faith and the necessary means have seemed to come at his call. From the very first, to the present time, this work has gone on expanding and gaining a larger and larger place in the hearts and contributions of the Christian public.

The United States Christian Commission was organized in the city of New York on the 16th of November, 1864, six months after the organization of the Baltimore Christian Association. During this period the battle of Bull Run, and the suffering consequent upon it, had taught additional lessons in regard to the importance of such efforts in behalf of the wounded and suffering. Multitudes of hearts throughout the land, began to yearn in sympathy with our maimed and bleeding heroes. Through the agency chiefly of George H. Stuart, Esq. of Philadelphia, a convention of delegates from the Young Men's Christian Associations in various cities of the land, assembled in the city of New York, and effected at the date named, the organization since known as the United States Christian Commission. During the next month, December, 1864, this organization met at Washington, D. C., and obtained the recognition and approval of the Government. And from that time onward, as the association has attained its character by its deeds, it has met with growing favor from the Chief Magistrate of the nation, heads of departments, officers of the army and navy, and especially among the soldiers in hospitals and camps, and through them, among the citizens at home.

On September 1, 1865, Mr. Griffith received an appointment from the Central Office at Philadelphia, authorizing him to organize the Maryland Branch of the United States Christian Commission, and constituting him its chairman. He has since become a useful member of the Executive Committee of the United States Christian Commission, of Philadelphia.

The history of the Christian Commission, like the war itself, is not yet written, nor at present can it be. This brief sketch may serve to give you a little clearer understanding of the claims of that stream which has continued to expand in its influence and power, until it is now fed by rills of benevolence from almost every village and church in the land from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from our northern boundary to our military lines. Nay, so wide has its fame become, that, by the law of affinity if not of gravitation, it has attracted to its course pure and sparkling drops from beyond our northern boundary, and has ever received its tribute from the other side of the broad Atlantic.

During the year 1864, this charity met with a very remarkable expansion. From less than \$200,000 gross receipts in 1863, (no more exact, it is true) it expanded to upwards of \$2,500,000 in the year 1864. This embraces the receipts at the Central and all the branch offices. There have been many instances of marked interposition of Providence, to supply the demand. But I will leave others to speak of these. Under the influence of this organization, the moral tone of the army has greatly improved. Old habits among the men are broken up, new and better ones are often formed. They may be merited for good or for evil. One who understands and appreciates the actions of the army may find ready access to the hearts of the soldiers. The Spirit of God seems almost everywhere to attend and bless the work of the Christian Commission. Were I to attempt the narration of particular incidents, I should transcend the limits and the theme assigned me, and encroach upon the field of others.

In regard to the work under my special charge, *Scripture distribution*—I will say in a word, that the Christian Commission distributed, during the year 1864, of the publications of the American Bible Society, more than 170,000 volumes. From the commencement, they have distributed over 1,137,000. We find a remarkable desire to have and to read the Word of God in the army. Many are forming an acquaintance with it who scarcely ever read it at home, and the results are most happy.

Notwithstanding all the ineligibility, laziness and corruption which are found in camp and field, the "Seed of the Spirit" is doing a mighty and blessed work in our army which will tell for good upon the future destinies of our nation; and in this item alone, scattering the Word of Life—will the labors of this heaven favored and heaven directed institution, find an abundant reward.

May you share largely the peculiar joy of those who prove, by a bountiful participation in this labor of love, the divinity of that utterance—"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

For the Sunday-School Times.

For the Sunday-School Times
A BRIEF SKETCH
OF THE
MARYLAND BRANCH
OF THE

U. S. Christian Commission.

AT a meeting in behalf of the Christian Commission, held in the Lutheran church at Cumberland, Md., on the evening of February 10th, the following remarks were made by the Rev. Wm. H. Gilbert, Army Agent of the American Bible Society:

We are assembled this evening, my friends, to serve the noble cause of the Christian Commission; and it seems very suitable that we should commence our exercises with a brief reference to the origin of the institution. In the absence of one far better qualified—the Chairman of the Maryland Branch of the organization—I have been requested to make some historical statements. Presidential circumstances have detained that faithful pioneer from being present; and I regret very much that you cannot be instructed in-ought from his lips, who could have told you so much from his own experience, in breathing the numerous and, sometimes, almost crushing difficulties which have, at times, beset the enterprise. If my utterance shall seem somewhat dry, I can comfort you with the assurance that the best wine, at this feast, is kept to the last, or, at any rate, to a later stage.

It is common to regard the Christian Commission enterprise as something altogether new and peculiar to our times; but we shall find at least a sanction for some of its features if we will turn to the record in the first book of Samuel, the seventeenth chapter. It is true the work was not so fully developed, and did not assume such large proportions, at that time, as in our day. But the parched corn, and the loaves of bread, and the cheese, which the anxious father sent to his three soldier sons in the valley of Elah, with the choroidal exhibition from the quiet hearthstone in Bethlehem-Judah, were not unlike those ministrations of love which, in our enterprise, proceed from the hearth at home to the tent on the battle field.

The same Being whose religion warmed the heart of Jesse and inspired his benevolence still inspires the hearts of his people. In the American war, Florence Nightingale, you well know, was the soul and center of a similar work. And it is by no means strange, in a land which has been so blessed and blessed by the light and spirit of the gospel, if war must disclose it, that Christian hearts should strive to mitigate its horrors with every appliance which willing hearts and a heavenly sympathy can minister. And it is one of the brightest evidences that God has not forsaken us that we find, almost simultaneously with the commencement of our deplorable war, spontaneously springing up from the hearts of the Christian public, an effort to alleviate its woes and bless the contending hosts.

Your own State, my friends, if I am correctly informed, has the honor of being the first to commence this enterprise, in an organized form. On the 16th of April, 1861, as you will remember, the streets of your chief city were stained with the first blood of the conflict. During the very next month, May, 1861, the present chairman of the Maryland Branch of the Christian Commission, Mr. G. S. Griffith, Esq., called together at his residence in Baltimore, several persons interested in the tract enterprise in his city, to consult what should be done for the soldiers who were beginning to come, and were likely to come in great numbers to your State. The result of this conference was the organization of a society called "The Baltimore Christian Association," which has been laboring from that time to the present, to relieve the wants, spiritual and temporal, of soldiers, in camp and hospital, and on the battle field. They have held a regular monthly meeting, I think without a single interruption, from the very first, and until within a few weeks past always at the house of Mr. Griffith.

This discerning Christian patriot, with an honorable pride for his city and State, urged as one motive for the work, that they might be able to wipe from the recollection of your Commonwealth, the stain of blood which the scene of April 19th had brought upon it. And very soon did the movement excite the surprise of the armies which rushed to your State. Expecting only the cowardly assault by brick-bat or musket, they were astonished and delighted to be met by the ministrations of Christian love, and soon learned to believe that the ignorant mob who had made the assault of April 19th, were not Baltimore, but had done their bloody deed without the knowledge or approval of the great mass of her intelligent citizens.

There was speedily found to be great demand for the work of this committee. Their supply of Scriptures, tracts, and religious periodicals, was altogether too small. The public were not yet aroused to furnish the means, either through the publishing societies or the periodical press. Accordingly the Society in Baltimore issued a circular, (a copy of which I hold in my hand) calling for donations in religious books, tracts, papers, &c. To this there was a liberal response.

They soon found also a very pressing demand, among the wounded and sick, to supply various trifles of food and clothing, such as the Government could not provide. To meet this demand, they made an appeal first to the citizens of Baltimore, and not in vain. With willing hearts and bountiful gifts, they responded to the call; and many a thrilling tear poured its way down a suffering soldier's cheek, evincing a gratitude that words refused to utter, and many a hard heart was softened by these gentle tokens of benevolent interest, and many a brave soldier was led to embrace a religiosity which could bring forth such Christ-like fruits.

Soon it was found necessary to make a wider appeal, and as many soldiers from Pennsylvania were recruited, and the papers in that State circulated the request, the people there forwarded large supplies.

This God has continued to prosper them. At the end of one year, in a report, the committee say that they "have been engaged in many benevolent societies which God has greatly prospered, but they were realized to the same extent, not witnessed such clear demonstrations of the guiding hand of Providence as in this Association. Little did they anticipate, however, at that time that the work would ever attain its present magnitude, in connection with the United States Christian Commission."

But the cause in your State has had to make its way under peculiar difficulties. Dependent for its support, upon a far from public sentiment, it has found itself where two men met, and to human view, has sometimes been in danger of foundering in the whirlpool between them. Who, soldiers from both armies came to be in hospitals under the care, the delegates finding these men lying side by side, sick and wounded, upon their cots, they could not minister to one and leave the other to starve. Their real, once to all such calculations was—"We are a Christian institution. If these enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." For a time benevolent efforts were abroad, threatening to produce as interference of the Government. Those were trying times. But when the Christian motive and reality of the committee were thoroughly understood by the authorities, they made no objection to their work, but granted them every necessary facility.

They have, day, & time, and to a noted against the great disaster, general of an abandoned treasury—con one day, men suffering and dying for want of those com-

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